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by means of charcoal, and to have procured the *metallic bases,* by causing their oxygen to combine with that substance.* An account of these experiments is given in a description of the cabinet of Madamoiselle Raab of Vienna, by Baron Born, and in the third and fourth edition of Lavoisier's elements of chemistry by Mr. Kerr, the translator. Baron Born, in this account, remarks that he expects soon to learn that the siliceous and argillaceous earths, are likewise *metallic oxides.* Mr. Kerr has also some very just and curious remarks on this subject, in which he refers hydrogen and azote, carbon, sulphur, and phosphorus, to the metallic class.

The following are the most striking analogies which exist between the earths and metallic oxides:

1. The earths may be reduced to white powders which form coloured salts with acids.
2. They are precipitated by prussiate of potash and tincture of galls.
3. None of the earths are combustible, and of course none of them are capable of combining with oxygen.
4. They are soluble in acids† without decomposing either water or the acid, to acquire oxygen, and consequently without effervescence; so are all metallic oxides, for no pure metal is soluble in an acid, unless it either decompose the acid or water, that it may be converted into an oxid, it was this circumstance that induced the great, but unfortunate Lavoisier to observe, that, "since oxygen is the bond of union between acids and metals, so it is between earths and acids, and that the earths are *metallic oxides,* with which oxygen has a stronger affinity, than with carbon."

Now, if it added so much to the glory of Sir Isaac Newton, to have concluded from the strong refracting power of water, that it contained a combustible body, though he was ignorant of its component parts; and if Vauquelin was led to the true analysis of the beryl, by the intimation he received from the discerning Huay, who concluded from mineralogical considerations, that it was formed of the same ingredients as the emerald, though he was unable to decompose it. If Huay was deservedly praised for this, what share is due to those who not twenty years since were almost satisfied of the *metallic nature* of the earths, though they were not acquainted with the means of demonstrating that fact by experiment? Or, in analyzing a mineral or compound of any kind, with what ease might we proceed, if previously informed of what elements it consisted.

Let us then, in congratulating Mr. Davy on his unexampled success, impartially reflect on what was effected by those who went before him; let us weigh the distinct merits of each, and bestow on each a proportionate share of approbation.

Reddere cuique sua, est æqui bonique hominis. J. M. S.

Belfast, May 12, 1809.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine

SIR,

AS there are some expressions, in the Review of my Introduction to the Irish Language, published in your Magazine, for March last, which tend directly (though, I am persuaded unintentionally) to mislead a person who is not a judge of the subject; I request, and expect of your partiality, the insertion of the following explanations.

I rest my pretensions to originality upon the conviction that at least *nine tenths* of my work, consist of matter that was never before published. A coincidence with other writers, in some things, must appear, even where there was nothing borrowed.

The number of moods, *modes* or *manners* of expression, is not greater than what is marked out by manifest differences. And the tenses are simply, past, present, and future, with the addition of the consuetudinal, a tense of the most expressive use in the Irish language. Nor will it appear strange that the Irish regular verb, which undergoes *eleven* inflexions, besides the personal terminations should be conjugated through five moods, and *four* tenses; when it is considered that many of the ablest grammarians, inflect the English verb through five moods, and *six* tenses, though it undergoes only *three* variations. The very different form assumed by several verbs, when used affirmatively, negatively, and interrogatively, suggested the propriety of exhibiting them at large. Indeed copiousness has been my object throughout; as I conceived it more useful to publish a book which a man might consult, than one that a child might get by rote. I believe the scheme of Irish verbs exhibited at pages 62, and 66, is more *concise,* and complete than any thing published before on the same subject.

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*In these experiments they must have been deceived; for though charcoal at a high temperature, has such an affinity for oxygen, as to be able to decompose water and most metallic oxides, yet it is certain that the earths cannot be decomposed by its means, since their base has a greater affinity for oxygen than charcoal has at any temperature we can produce,

† Silica excepted, soluble only in fluoric acid.

But the most singular sentence in the review is the following. "The work also contains *some* familiar dialogues which will be useful to the student, and a translation of the songs of Deardra, from the death of the three sons of Usna. If these were intended for an exercise to learners, they are too loosely translated."

Whether the incorrect punctuation here be *intentional* or not, I cannot determine; but it certainly implies that the translation of the dialogues, &c. (comprising 84 pages, on a variety of subjects) and that of the *three* songs is equally free. This is incorrect. The former are translated with great closeness; the latter with that freedom which is observed in the most elegant translations.

The standard of orthography, which I have always followed, is the Irish Bible, published nearly 130 years ago, by bishop Bedel. When a better shall be invented, I shall readily adopt it; in the mean time, it is sufficient to observe that the ancient manuscripts afford no *one* such standard

I am sir, yours &c.

Dundalk, May 5, 1809. W. NEILSON.

P. S. I forbear to make any remarks upon the anonymous grammar recently published; as I think the compiler of one grammar not the most proper person to review the similar work of another.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON THE COMPARATIVE STRENGTH BARILLA AND POTASH.

I AM pleased to find that your Magazine gives an account of the new discoveries in chemistry, and thus may serve as a literary journal of the progress in the sciences and the arts, after the model of the most respectable British Magazines—a line hitherto very seldom attempted in Ireland, but in which I trust you will persevere. You must frequently borrow from brother Journalists, who live nearer to the sources of intelligence; but when you candidly acknowledge your obligations, all is fair. Practical communications on subjects relating to the staple manufacture of Ireland, particularly that part of it so closely connected with chemistry, might be very serviceable. To contribute my share, and in hopes of drawing forth similar contributions from others, I send an account of some experiments lately made at my bleach-green on the comparative of barilla and potash by means of the alkaline hydrometer, graduated so, that 0 stands for water and 3½ to 4 denotes the strength used for the ley in bleaching. An equal weight of the following alkalies, dissolved in similar quantities of water, produced the following results:

Barilla,................	3¾
Montreal Potash,	6½
New York ditto.	6¼

Or in round numbers the comparative strength of those materials was in the following proportion, and consequent value in bleaching viz.

Barilla,................	15
Montreal Potash,	26
New York ditto.	25

So that as an efficacious material in bleaching, barilla does not appear to be worth more than three fifths of the value of potash. K.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE HERRING,

Concluded from p. 245, No. IX.

THE herring is very much exposed to pursuit; man above all is its particular foe, not only along the coasts, but sometimes even in the open